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EDITORIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

ONE of the provisions (Art. 36) of the International Rules of Botanical Nomenclature, adopted at Vienna in 1905, reads: "On and after January 1, 1908, the publication of names of new groups will be valid only when they are accompanied by a latin diagnosis." The debate before the adoption of this proposition (Art. 77 of Briquet's *Texte Synoptique* of 1904) was spirited and was participated in by representatives of ten countries: Austria (von Hayek), Belgium (Durand), France (Gillot and Perrot), Germany (Drude, Engler, Fedde, Hallier, Harms and Magnus), Java (Hochreutiner), Russia (Borodin and de Jaczewski), Spain (Návas), Switzerland (Briquet and Wilczek) and the United States (Barnhart, Britton and Robinson). It became quite clear at Vienna, that every one conversant with current activity in taxonomy recognized the tremendous volume of fundamentally important work done by the botanists of Russia, Finland, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and other European countries whose native languages are not so generally familiar in the scientific world as are English, German and the romance languages; and that farther east, the Japanese, and in recent years the Chinese, are doing work to which we all need ready access. To insist upon any one, two or three languages (notably English, French and German) as valid for the publication of diagnoses, to the exclusion of other modern tongues, would inevitably stir nationalistic and racial opposition by many whose work we all ought to understand and to follow. Practically all the fundamental works of taxonomy (Linnaeus, *Genera Plantarum* and *Species Plantarum*; Hedwig, *Species Muscorum*; Persoon, *Synopsis methodica Fungorum*; DeCandolle, *Prodromus*; Fries, *Systema mycologicum*; Kunth, *Enumeratio Plantarum*; Bentham & Hooker, *Genera Plantarum*; Saccardo, *Sylloge*; Engler,

Das Pflanzenreich; etc., etc.) have at least their diagnostic portions in Latin, so that every competent taxonomist must, of necessity, be able to decipher descriptions in that tongue. Therefore, the compromise was reached at Vienna of demanding that new *diagnoses* should be in Latin.

The final vote at Vienna was 105 in favor of the Latin diagnosis, 88 against it. Consequently, there was some justification for those who do not feel bound by majority rulings to argue that the vote was not decisive. In line with this opposition to the majority decision much important taxonomic work, notably by certain Americans and Japanese, has been issued with nationalistic fervor but with indifference to the convenience of others and in defiance of the rule; its authors balking at the Latin diagnosis in their own work, though glad to have it in the work of colleagues whose native languages they could not decipher. Accordingly, the subject was reopened for full discussion and reconsideration at the Fifth International Botanical Congress at Cambridge (England) in 1930. Various propositions were presented: to abandon the rule absolutely; to make it a recommendation rather than a rule; to add as alternative languages English, French and German; or to admit any language using Roman letters. No one desired to exclude the valuable publications, notably in the United States, from institutions which had not wholly accepted the old Article 36, especially in view of the fact that the original vote on that article had not been essentially unanimous.

In their communications to the Cambridge Congress the Russian botanists strongly urged the retention of the article, and recommendations from botanists regularly writing in the Latin alphabet were largely in favor of some such provision. When the actual deliberations on nomenclature were reached, certain fundamental alterations in the International Rules were made to meet the desires of those Americans who had not heretofore fully accepted the Rules; and the feeling was nearly unanimous, that, if the vote on the retention of Article 36 were decisive, the date of its application might, with propriety, be altered so that publications made during the period following the possibly indecisive vote at Vienna might be validated. Recognizing that the leading botanists of the world were much nearer than heretofore to a mutual understanding upon the necessary, but always perplexing, subject of nomenclature and very generally agreeing that some provision is necessary to insure to botanists of all races and tongues in-

telligent access to the taxonomic work done in all countries, the Congress reaffirmed the requirement of a Latin diagnosis but voted to change the date for application of Article 36 from January 1, 1908 to January 1, 1932, and to exclude the Bacteria from the provision of the rule, bacteriology having little in common with ordinary taxonomic work.

That the Congress was a remarkably representative one (though, of course, dominantly British) no one can question; the registration was approximately 1200, of whom about 200 were from the United States and Canada. The deliberations in the sessions on Nomenclature, presided over by Merrill of the New York Botanical Garden, were participated in by many outstanding taxonomists, representing about 30 nations, such experienced students, to mention a few whose work is familiar to Americans (and omitting the large representation from North America), as Briquet (Switzerland); Mangin, Moreau, Gagnepain, Guillaumain and Maire (France); Pampanini (Italy); Handel-Mazzetti, Janchen, Pfeiffer and Pia (Austria); von Degen (Hungary); Borza (Rumania); Domin and Podpera (Czechoslovakia); Diels, Harms, Schellenberg, Schneider, Mattfeld and Markgraf (Germany); Henrard, Jeswiet and Pulle (Holland); Naveau and Hauman (Belgium); Ostendfeld and Christensen (Denmark); Juel and Robert Fries (Sweden); Holmboe (Norway); Prain, Rendle, Hill, Ramsbottom, Stapf, Cotton, W. W. Smith, Craib, Davy, Sprague, Wilmott and Miss Green (Britain); Black (Australia); Allen (New Zealand); Parker (India); Chun (China). After prolonged and very free discussion the ballot, as shown by the unofficial record before us, indicated 371 votes in favor of, 24 opposed to, the requirement of the Latin diagnosis. This vote of 371 to 24 (a ratio of $15\frac{1}{2}$ to 1) is far nearer to unanimity than the vote at Vienna, of 105 to 88 (a ratio of 11 to 9) and should be considered absolutely decisive.

Convinced that true progress in the science can be achieved only by the acceptance and conscientious following of the decisions of the overwhelming majority of taxonomists at duly constituted international congresses, the Editorial Board of RHODORA wishes to announce its purpose to accept the ruling that, beginning January 1, 1932, publication of names of new groups of plants (Bacteria excepted) will be valid only when they are accompanied by a Latin diagnosis. By a *diagnosis* is meant, not necessarily a long and detailed description, but at least a concise statement of the leading characters (the

diagnostic characters), which can, if desired, be made in a few lines. Authors are, therefore, asked, out of consideration for those of other linguistic stocks and in order that their publications may be valid, to see that any descriptions of new plants or new groups which they propose to publish in RHODORA, have at least a diagnosis in Latin. If contributors find themselves embarrassed by this requirement, they may supply an English diagnosis which, for the time being, at least, the Editorial Board will undertake to have converted (with charges at cost for matter of considerable length) into Latin.

CONCERNING SOME SPECIES OF CORNUS OF PHILIP MILLER

OLIVER ATKINS FARWELL

SOME years ago I had occasion to consult Philip Miller's *Gardeners' Dictionary*, Ed. 8 (1768). At that time I gave the volume a more or less cursory examination and marked certain species therein for future investigation. Amongst these were several species of *Cornus*, and especially *C. Amomum*. In Miller's discussion of this species he says: "The shoots of the fifth sort are of a beautiful red color in winter; and in summer, the leaves being large, of a whitish color on their under side, and the bunches of white flowers growing at the extremity of every branch, renders this shrub valuable; and in autumn, when the large bunches of blue berries are ripe, they make a fine appearance."

I was puzzled to understand how such a good description of *Cornus stolonifera* could apply to the current understanding of *C. Amomum*. Both species are rather frequent in Michigan, and I have put a large amount of study on the species in the field, and the more I have observed them, the less I could apply Miller's remarks to our Silky Cornel. A close study of Linn's description of *C. sericea*, which has universally been considered a synonym of Miller's species, indicated that he likewise was describing the same species with beautiful red shoots. Each, likewise, quoted the same plate of Plukenet (*Phyt. Part 3, Table 169, Fig. 3*) as a synonym, but the text each quoted was not identical. I finally wrote Mr. Mackenzie for information about the text matter, and he kindly sent me the full description of Plukenet. I also sent specimens of various species of *Cornus* to the British Museum, asking for comparisons with the plate of Plukenet,